

Illinois Early Learning Council

October 22, 2012
11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Roosevelt University
425 S. Wabash Ave.
Room 418
Chicago, IL 60605
Conference Line: 888-494-4032
Access Code: 7198518485

Meeting Minutes

Members participating: Lori Baas, Karen Berman, Jeanna Capito, Tim Carpenter, George Davis, Daniel Fitzgerald, Jana Fleming, Maricela Garcia, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Daniel Harris, Ava Harston, Harriette Herrera, Colleen Jones, Sarah Madson, Janet Maruna, Beth Mascitti-Miller, Harriet Meyer, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Joe Neri, Beatrice Nichols, Donna Nylander, Geoffrey Obrzut, Sylvia Puente, Claudia Quigg, Diana Rauner, Elliot Regenstein, Pam Reising, Rechner, Vanessa Rich, Gina Ruther, Byrnn Seibert, Sara Slaughter, Julie Smith, Luz Maria Solis, Teri Talan, Joan Vitale, Judith Walker-Kendrick, Maria Whelan, Granada Williams, Cass Wolfe, Josie Yanguas, Karen Yarbrough, Cindy Zumwalt

Phone participants: Andrea Palmer, Linda Saterfield

I. **Welcome and Announcements**

a. **Introductions**

Holly Stadler, Dean of Roosevelt University's College of Education, welcomed participants and highlighted Roosevelt University's education innovations.

Co-Chair Harriet Meyer announced that she and Julie Smith will be creating a small ad hoc group to discuss communications and that Harriet will be the chair of the group. This ad hoc committee will take over the responsibilities of the Public Awareness Committee. All nominations should be sent to Kim Collins.

b. **Approval of June Meeting Minutes**

Minutes for June 25, 2012 Council meeting were approved with the amendment that the motion on Infant-Toddler guidelines be added.

II. **Updates**

a. **Federal Update**

Katie Williams from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shared updates, noting that the new fiscal year was started with a budget supported by

a continuing resolution for six months, during which time grantees are being funded at 80%. She mentioned that the designee renewal process will shift from an indefinite period to a five year grantee period. She also mentioned a focus on school readiness and family engagement at the federal level.

b. State Update

Linda Saterfield of the Department of Human Services shared updates pertaining to the FY 14 budget planning. The department's childcare caseload has remained steady at around 160,000 and DHS is preparing for January negotiations with SEIU on a new collective bargaining agreement. She also noted that early intervention programs may see a shortfall due to the new requirement of obtaining parental permission. The closure of state facilities has been delayed due to the process of placing residents in community care.

Cindy Zumwalt from the Illinois State Board of Education provided a capacity update for PFA. She mentioned that the \$380 million and 95,000 Preschool For All slots from FY09 should serve as the benchmark. In FY12, there was \$325 million and 85,000 PFA slots; in FY13, \$300 million and 73,000 PFA slots. She also mentioned that birth-to-three monitoring funds should be released soon through an RFP and that 250 teachers have already been trained to implement KIDS.

c. Local Update

Vanessa Rich shared an update on the Chicago: Ready to Learn! process, noting that applications are sent electronically to an independent assessor that will return scores to the City by November 19. She also presented a handout that detailed the selection criteria. The City of Chicago will review the recommendations from the independent reviewer and then the Federal Government will approve the delegate agencies.

- 56 applicants
 - 44 currently delegates
 - 8 currently child care partners with delegates
 - 9 new applicants

Beth Mascitti-Miller thanked everyone involved for their cooperation regarding Chicago: Ready to Learn! and relayed Chicago Public Schools' efforts to work with continuing and new principals and schools to get their applications in.

Maria Whelan inquired about the current number of community-based slots. Beth said that there were about 6,000.

Maria asked if there was a "flunk point" below which an application would be automatically rejected. Beth indicated that there was not, because of the need to first look at the entire applicant pool. She noted that they had received

enough applications for slots beyond the number of slots available. Lastly, Chapin Hall engaged many families and resources to determine high need communities.

III. **Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge**

Julie Smith thanked all involved for their efforts in compiling the application. She noted that the Executive Committee gave feedback in early October, which was combined with feedback from the Phase 1 application and the ongoing meetings of the Leadership Team. She also reminded members that this second phase is not a competition with other states, but rather a negotiation with the Departments of Education and Health & Human Services.

a. **Overview**

Theresa Hawley gave an overview of the Phase 2 application. She stated that the overall purpose remains the same and that it is still built around the same initiatives, but that the scale of many initiatives has decreased and that the goals are slightly less aggressive. This is a function of the limitations placed on Phase 2 applications, most notably that only half of the Phase 1 funding requested is available and that no new activities may be introduced.

b. **Application Review**

Governance Structure – There will be a Leadership Team, and Inter-Agency Team and Inter-Agency Project Teams (Data, QRIS, Community Collaborations, Workforce Development, etc.). This is different from the consortia that were proposed in Phase 1. The work that was proposed for the consortia will now be done by the OECD because of changes in the contracting requirements.

The team will work toward a coordinated budget proposal and took the first step last year with joint budget hearings.

QRIS – Theresa mentioned that the QRIS has been restructured to reflect the change in available resources, but is still in line with what was originally proposed. However, it will still be much broader than the existing system and will include common definitions, parent-friendly information and a roadmap for providers' improvement. She stated that there will now be multiple ways for programs to show evidence of meeting specific standards.

Theresa also gave an overview of what each QRIS level represents: Level 1 is “licensing,” Level 2 is about training, Level 3 is about programs “engaging in rigorous self-assessment”), Level 4 is “good” (and the State will send an assessor to verify) and Level 5 is centered around Quality Awards (in such subcategories as Preschool Instruction, SPED Instruction, Cultural & Linguistic Diversity, etc.). She noted that it is unlikely that the same rate enhancement that currently exists will be possible.

Karen Yarbrough asked to what extent the grant focuses on the worth of the levels and their distinctions. Theresa replied that there will be a validation study in the second and third years that focuses on child outcomes. It should show whether or not there are any significant differences between the levels.

Harriet Meyer inquired about how the Leadership Team will ensure it received input from various sectors given that the Phase 2 application removes the consortium component. Theresa responded that links are intentionally created to the committees and subcommittees of the Early Learning Council, and that partnerships exist through contracts with groups such as INCCRRA.

Timeline – Theresa stated that the application is due October 26, 2012. A scope will then be created and submitted within 90 days of January 2013. The federal departments will then take up to 90 days to respond, meaning that only a small portion of the work outlined in the grant will start before the summer of 2013.

Budget – Theresa went through the application's spending allocations. She highlighted the flexible resource pool and the fact that 6-10 high-need communities will be selected based on existing needs analysis.

Members discussed the definition of "high need" children. Theresa noted that based on the federal definition there are about 400,000 in Illinois (about 70,000 per age cohort). Gaylord Gieseke and other members highlighted the importance of considering factors beyond poverty in calculating "high need." Low income children living in communities considered to be high income were highlighted.

Theresa noted that the Leadership Team is going to work with the Latino Policy Forum to ensure that students take advantage of the existing ELL scholarships.

Theresa was asked how providers will be notified about the changes in the QRIS and Theresa replied that working with DCFS to notify all programs is a number one priority and at the top of the work plan.

Julie Smith informed members that at this point, no statutory changes will be necessary in order to implement the grant. Some rule changes may become necessary further on, but for now the current rules will suffice.

Claudia Quigg inquired about specifics around family engagement. Theresa encouraged members to email her before October 31 with input on family engagement. She informed them that a Level 5 Quality Award will lay out a robust vision for what the ideal vision of family engagement is, but that it is less defined below that award level.

Theresa Hawley noted that these funds represent less than a 1% increase in early childhood spending year to year. It will help to sharpen the focus of our current state investments.

Theresa and Julie thanked INCCRRA, McCormick, CPS, ISBE, DHS, DCFS, Kim Collins, Sara Slaughter, Phyllis Glink and John Furr for their hard work in completing the application.

i. **Action Item: Review and Approve Application**

The application was approved with an amendment of thanks to Theresa and her team introduced by Maria Whelan and seconded by Phyllis Glink. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. **Committee Updates**

a. **Home Visiting Task Force**

Diana Rauner updated members on the committee's focus on MIECHV implementation. She introduced Leslie Schwartz and Joanna Su as new members of the Office of Early Childhood Development. She also announced that the Task Force created two subcommittees: Sustainability and Health Outcomes.

b. **Data, Research and Evaluation**

Elliot Regenstein updated members on the unified data system that John Snow Inc. has been working on. They will come out with a report that reviews 22 systems and looks at other states' efforts. He stated that it will be linked to Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge work.

Teri Talan shared the committee's desire to be a repository of data and reports. The committee is currently considering an ad hoc committee on research and evaluation gaps that can inform proposed work.

c. **Family and Community Engagement**

i. **Action Items**

- a. Maria Whelan moved to expand the scope of the Capital/Infrastructure Subcommittee to address transportation barriers. The motion passed by consensus.
- b. Maria Whelan moved to create a Parent Engagement Subcommittee. The motion passed by consensus.
 - a. The subcommittee will be focused on exploring meaningfully ways of engaging parents in the work of the ELC.
- c. Maria Whelan removed her motion regarding the submission of a letter to the City of Chicago regarding the coordination of the

Early Child Care Construction Grants Program and the City of Chicago Early Childhood Competitive Application.

- a. Julie Smith noted that there are a couple of steps still to go in the review process. Everything is moving along but there is not a date on when the awards will be announced. The Governor included additional Capital funds in his FY 13 budget and remains committed to the program but the legislature did not take action.

d. **Program Standards and Quality**

Members were informed that the committee is working closely with the RTT-ELC team and cross walking well. In August, it invited the Workforce Development Committee to join PDAC. An increase to 29,000 (from 18,000) of Gateways Registry Members was highlighted. Jeanna Capito noted that birth-to-three benchmarks for infant-toddler guidelines were being reviewed.

e. **Systems Integration and Alignment**

The Health Subcommittee is partnering with DCFS to examine licensing in Chicago and dashboard health indicators. Work is being done to explore braiding/blending options and Title 1 funds.

V. **Adjourn**

Next Meeting is February 25, 2013